

Peripatetic President

THE PAST YEAR has seen a future president of the American Medical Association playing a tremendously important part in portraying to the public the true position of the medical profession in the battle against government-controlled, government-dominated, compulsory-taxed medical care for the aged.

Doctor Edward R. Annis of Miami, an unknown in national medical ranks two years ago, emerged in opposition to the King-Anderson proposal of 1961 so spectacularly that his fame preceded him to the point that the A.M.A. elected him president-elect in 1962. This must surely rank as a meteoric advance by an individual member who had not gone "through the chairs" before achieving the top spot in medical organization.

Since last year Doctor Annis has continued his campaign to acquaint the public with the position of medicine and with the true facts behind bureaucratic and political proposals to tax all the people for limited medical care for those above the 65 age limit regardless of need.

California was most fortunate in having Doctor Annis and his talents available for the final ten days of March. He came to the state with the avowed desire to be kept busy and to make maximum use of his time. That he succeeded admirably in this desire is attested by a mound of press clippings, some of full-page size, which reported his many addresses, gave personal interviews and explored his basic philosophy of medical care rendered without the hindrance and domination of government.

In ten days Doctor Annis appeared before 25 audiences, some numbering as many as 1,200 people and the entire list totaling some 12,500 people. These were medical and lay audiences both, some of mixed complexion and many including civic and community leaders.

On top of this busy speaking schedule, parts of which required the use of chartered airplanes, Doctor Annis made three television appearances, five radio appearances and still found time to tape several programs for later television release.

In the hope that they will be useful to individual physicians who may have occasion from time to

time to state the case for freedom from statism in the practice of medicine, excerpts from Dr. Annis' speeches are printed elsewhere in the current issue of your journal. (See page 286.)

Happily we can announce that Doctor Annis was not only busy while he was in California but was most effective. His straightforward meeting of issues, his keen analysis of legislative proposals and his telling statements of opposition have indeed had a profound effect on the public attitude. Recent nationwide polls show public support of King-Anderson proposals to have slipped considerably. Together with administrative priorities having shifted to other legislative proposals, the loss of public support is considered one of the major reasons for deferring Congressional action on King-Anderson until next year. There is no guarantee that such deferral will remain solid but present evidence is that King-Anderson will not emerge as an active issue in Congress until 1964.

On the state level the weekly publication of the California Labor Federation, AFL-CIO, blasted Doctor Annis and other medical leaders in the C.M.A. and A.M.A. in its issue immediately following Doctor Annis' tour of the state. Apparently the following he attracted with his call for truthfulness in legislation has stung some of the proponents of King-Anderson. In his California appearances Doctor Annis left one key admonition for physicians. He stressed and reiterated the position that medicine has definite and valid grounds for opposing King-Anderson legislation, that medicine has the right to speak out in its opposition and that medicine's position will not be known to or appreciated by the public *unless medicine does speak out*.

Surely Doctor Annis has proved his own effectiveness. He is a private practitioner who is gifted with the ability to think and speak clearly and effectively. There are others of his ilk in our own ranks. Let us hope that other physicians will take heed of his urging to become more vocal. The public has demonstrated its willingness to listen and to change its position when given the facts. Our job is to make sure that the facts are provided. The people will do the rest.

